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RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY  
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6266  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 8661  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 4830  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 6871  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 9933  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1835  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2136  
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 8491  
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - BURMA

11. LEAD STORIES: Top stories on Monday morning included China's fivefold increase in exports over the past six years since its accession to the WTO in 2001.

12. "Empty Promise of Democracy Will Not Work" The liberal Asahi editorialized (2/24): "Burma's military government has announced that it will establish a new constitution and call a general election in 2010. Under ordinary circumstances, we would have welcomed this as a step toward democracy. However, there are too many problems with Burma's plans.... Burma was the subject of harsh international criticism following its bloody crackdown on monks who had been staging antigovernment rallies. The Burmese government's announcement appears to be aimed at reducing the international pressure.... The military government should immediately release opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi ahead of a national referendum in May in order to create an environment where the opposition is free to campaign. If the government fails to do so, it will inevitably be criticized for holding a sham election. Such an election is unacceptable as a democratic procedure. Concern about Burma's path toward democracy was expressed at an ASEAN foreign ministerial. The international community, including the UN and Japan, needs to increase its commitment to the nation."

SCHIEFFER